



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

MAR 11 2005

Dear Tribal Leader:

As Secretary, I am committed to enhancing the tribal consultation process at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).


I am proud of the success HHS has in working with Indian Tribes, and I realize that significant opportunities for progress remain. I pledge that this Department will continue to build strong partnerships with Tribal governments to provide health and human services in Indian Country.

On January 14, 2005, we implemented the revised Department Tribal Consultation Policy, and I am pleased to forward it to you. During the last eighteen months HHS consulted extensively with Indian Tribes to revise the 1997 HHS Tribal Consultation Policy. We worked closely with Tribal leaders, Tribal representatives, and national Tribal organizations. The Secretary's Office formed a joint Tribal Consultation Policy Revision Workgroup (TCPRW) with our Indian Health Service Division to work together to strengthen the Department's policies.

The Policy reflects the collective efforts undertaken and our desire to build upon the partnerships formed. I believe it also reiterates the commitment to the government-to-government relationship that exists between the United States and federally recognized Indian Tribes.

I wish to express my gratitude to the many Tribal leaders, TCPRW members, HHS staff, other individuals and organizations that contributed their time and resources to accomplish the revised Department Tribal Consultation Policy.

Sincerely,

  
Michael O. Leavitt

Enclosure